

AMENDMENTS

In the Drawings

Claims 1-20 have been cancelled and claims 21-36 have been added as new.

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to Figs. 1-4A and 6C, which changes were previously approved by the Examiner in the parent application of the subject invention (U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/637,466). These sheets, which includes Figs. 1-4A and 6C, replace the original sheets. The only changes to the figures are changes to Figs. 1-4A and Fig. 6C. In Figs. 1-4A, the legend "Prior Art" has been added. In Fig. 6C, reference numeral "11" has been added to indicate the opening in the test strip holder for receiving a test strip. While changes have only been made to Figs. 1-4A and 6C, a complete set of figures are herewith provided as "replacement sheets". Accordingly, attached herewith are (1) replacement sheets for Fig. 1, Fig. 2, Fig. 3, Fig. 4, Fig. 4A, Fig. 5, Fig. 6A, Fig. 6B and Fig. 6C, and (2) annotated sheets for Fig. 1, Fig. 2, Fig. 3, Fig. 4, Fig. 4A and Fig. 6C indicating the changes made thereto.

In the Specification

At page 1, please insert the following paragraph after the title of the application:

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This is a continuation of U.S. Patent Application No. 09/637,466 filed August 11, 2000, entitled "Strip Holder for Use in a Test Strip Meter".

Please replace the paragraph beginning at line 21 on page 9 with the following amended paragraph.

Turning now to the figures, Fig. 6A provides an overhead view of a meter device 60 with a removable strip holder 62 according to the subject invention placed over the opening of the meter. Also shown in Fig. 6A is test strip 10 showing sample application port 12. As is shown in Fig. 6A, the strip holder 62 is configured to at least partially encompass the sample application port 12 by forming a semi-circle around the sample application port 12. Fig. 6B shows a cross sectional view of the test strip holder shown in Fig. 6A, where the cross-sectional view is taken along Section A-A as shown in Fig. 6A. Fig. 6C provides a blow up view of the view shown in Fig. 6B. In Fig. 6C, test strip [12] 10 is inserted into test strip holder 62 and meter 60 in the direction of arrow Y. Lip element 66 of test strip holder 62 presses down on test strip [12] 10 to form a liquid seal at the contact point of the lip element and the upper surface of the strip, while raised element or bump 64 pushes upward on the bottom of the strip with a substantially equal, if not identical force.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at line 27 on page 9 with the following amended paragraph:

(Amended) In using the above systems that include the subject test strip holders, the first step the user performs is to turn on the meter, thereby energizing strip detector 40, sample detector 42, measurement system 44, and optional heater 46. The second step is to insert the strip. The strip is inserted through the opening 11 of the test strip holder 62 and into the device. A liquid seal is formed at the contact point between the strip holder and the upper surface of test strip 10. Preferably, the strip is not transparent over at least a part of its area, so that an inserted strip will block the illumination by LED 40a of detector 40b.

(More preferably, the intermediate layer is formed of a non-transparent material, so that background light does not enter measurement system 44.) Detector 40b thereby senses that a strip has been inserted and triggers bladder actuator 48 to compress bladder 14. A meter display 50 then directs the user to apply a sample to sample port 12 as the third and last step the user must perform to initiate the measurement sequence. The empty sample port is reflective. When a sample is introduced into the sample port, it absorbs light from LED 42a and thereby reduces the light that is reflected to detector 42b. That reduction in light, in turn, signals bladder actuator 48 to release bladder 14. The resultant suction in channel 16 draws sample through measurement area 18 to stop junction 22. Light from LED 44a passes through measurement area 18, and detector 44b monitors the light transmitted through the sample as it is clotting. Analysis of the transmitted light as a function of time (as described below) permits a calculation of the PT time, which is displayed on the meter display 50. Preferably, sample temperature is maintained at about 37°C by heater 46.